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AUTHOR	Cunningham, William G.; Gresso, Donn W.
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ABSTRACT

Changing the system of rules, roles, and relationships that determine how the components of school redesign are addressed is the challenge that confronts administrators who seek to create a culture of excellence in schools. This book examines the role of effective leadership in achieving significant educational improvement, arguing that culture, rather than structure, is the telling component in educational organizations. Data were obtained from the Danforth Foundation's School Administrators Fellowship Program, which documented the experiences of approximately 70 researchers, 40 superintendents, 80 principals, 30 school board members, and 60 teachers. The first two chapters discuss the context of American education and the culture of school systems that were successful in implementing excellence. The next nine chapters analyze the cultural attributes that encourage continuous improvement: the vertical team approach; vision, not criticism; collegiality; values and interest; quality information, and improvement; personal and professional development; employee empowerment; sustained innovation; and school-university partnership. The final chapter discusses the implications of a culture's supporting participative forms of organizational improvement. It ends with a discussion of the qualities necessary for a successful, culturally supported, site-based, participative program for American education. Four tables and three figures are included. (LMI)

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